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Participation of Latino Spanish-Speaking Families in the IEP Process

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Participation of Latino Spanish-Speaking Families in the IEP Process

Guadalupe Zamora

Action Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of
Arts in Education

California State University Monterey Bay, Special Education Department

May 2015

LATINO SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENT PARTICIPATION

Participation of Latino Spanish-Speaking Families in the IEP Process

By: Guadalupe Zamora

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LATINO SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENT PARTICIPATION

Abstract

This study explored the Latino Spanish-Speaking parents' perception of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process and looked into barriers, and misconceptions that contributed to the lack of Latino Spanish Speaking parent participation. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected over a five-week period with parents of middle school students in our mild to moderate program. Key findings: difference in the average participation rate between Latino Spanish-speaking parents and English-only parents, Latino Spanish-speaking parents answer more questions than they ask questions, parents believe participation is simply attending meetings, and for Latino Spanish-speaking parents information presented in initial meetings is very confusing and difficult to understand. Recommendations made to increase parent participation: providing an understanding of special education, explaining the difference in programs, simplifying information during initial meetings and clarifying misconceptions of special education to Latino Spanish-speaking parents during the IEP process.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is a legal document that must be completed for children that have a disability to ensure they receive specialized education (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights [OCR], 2010). In order to be able to complete the IEP document a meeting must be conducted to discuss the plan suggested by the IEP team. The people who make up the IEP team are the Local Educational Agency (LEA) representative, who in most cases is the principal or vice principal of the school, the students general education teacher and the case carrier, which would be the resource teacher in a for mild to moderate program. If the student requires other services such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, mental health counseling, or any other service, then that service provider will also be a participant on the IEP team. The Department of Education records state that the general education teacher, special education teacher, related service provider, and the LEA representative, must be present at the students IEP meeting, (National Archives and Records Administration, W. C., & Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), W. C. (ED), Washington, DC.). All participants have a say in the education plan of the student and all participants must agree before the IEP is signed and put into effect.

While the IEP team is important and necessary, the parents or guardians of the child with educational rights are considered to be the key components of the team because they not only provide essential information for educators to acquire knowledge to fully understand the child at school and at home, they also have the right to accept or decline a suggested plan. Under the notice of procedural safeguards, parents or parent guardians are given information regarding, evaluations, parental consent, change of placement, and educational records among other

information (Yell, M. L., 1998). Therefore, full parent participation of parents and parent guardians is extremely necessary to not only to provide essential information about the child but also to advocate for their child's education needs.

Problem Statement

Through working with Latino Spanish-speaking parents of children with mild to moderate disabilities in Monterey County for the last six years, first as a paraprofessional and now as a Resource teacher, it has been apparent that many Latino Spanish speaking parents show a lack of participation during the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings and process.

Currently, observations during IEP meetings with Latino Spanish-speaking parents shown that the following behaviors are presented: parents speak minimally, parents do not ask questions (even if they seem to be confused), and parents do not share concerns whether at school or at home. Many times it feels as if they are simply agreeing with everything said at the meeting, but it is unknown whether they truly understand and agree or if they are confused with what the different terminology means because they do not feel comfortable asking questions. It is frustrating to see Latino Spanish speaking parents not utilizing their power of advocacy as other non Spanish-speaking parents currently are.

The difference in parent participation among parents of different backgrounds is very noticeable for Special Education teachers. Conversations regarding parent participation have arisen and some colleagues have interpreted the lack of engagement as lack of caring. Moreover, some colleagues think that it is easier to have an IEP meeting with Latino Spanish-speaking parents because they do not question or prolong the meeting with concerns, questions, or concerns. The lack of participation and engagement can be due to many different reasons. What is important is to identify Latino Spanish speaking parents' perceptions of the IEP meeting

process and determine whether there is a need for more information that would make the parents feel more confident to be able to actively participate in IEP meetings. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that parents understand their invaluable role as an active participant in their child's education and for parents to comprehend all aspects of the IEP document so as to be an advocate for their child's academic and social progress in the best way possible.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to allow Latino Spanish-speaking parents to identify their perceptions and understanding of IEP meetings and therefore determine if there is a need for specific information for Spanish-speaking parents to learn in order to be active participants. Doing the research will help me have a better understanding of Latino Spanish-speaking parents' perspectives of the IEP process. I will learn how they feel about their participation in the meetings, if they feel incorporated in the meetings, and if they feel comfortable enough to truly express themselves at the IEP meetings. With the different parent perspectives in mind then, I should be able to provide an appropriate recommendation to be implemented by the administrators, teachers and parents to help Latino Spanish-speaking parents to be active participants.

Research Questions

The following are research questions I proposed for my action research project:

1. What contributes to the current lack of participation of Latino Spanish speaking parents, during IEP meetings, at my current school site?
2. What information is necessary to fill the knowledge gap for parents who have a difficult time understanding the IEP process in general?

Theoretical Model

There is extensive research surrounding the reasons to explain why non-English speakers lack participation, not only in meetings but also more generally, in the general child's educational experiences. It is important to understand that the problems go further than a lack of knowledge or understanding, but rather extend into culture and equity. The following theory will provide further understanding of factors contributing to parent lack of participation. The theoretical model that forms the basis of my study is, the Cultural Competence Theory because it deals with the interaction of people of different cultures knowing how to work together effectively.

Cultural Competency. The Cultural Competence Theory pertains to people interacting effectively with other people of different cultures and socio economic backgrounds. This theory focuses on four particular components: awareness of culture, knowing cultural practices, attitude towards other cultures and knowing how to work with other cultures. This idea of cultural competency is crucial specifically at my school site because of the high number of students and families from other cultures. We have families that are Latino but even then they are from different regions of Mexico or from other countries in Central America and they all have different cultures. These cultural differences, as they are presented in parent participation, are particularly difficult for my colleagues to understand and this therefore creates many misunderstandings and misperceptions about parent behaviors during IEP meetings.

The main issue with cultural competency is that we, as professionals, do not always take the time to fully understand the culture of students and families. Instead, families are cataloged into groups and stereotyped the group based on prior experiences. The actions of these families are interpreted based on generalized beliefs rather than an individualized understanding of their situations. I am able to have some understanding of different cultures because of how and where

I was raised. I am more familiar with some of these cultural differences than my other colleagues and because of that I am frequently asked cultural questions or about traditions of families instead of asking the parent directly. A better understanding of the family cultures can extend into a better understanding of the families' attitudes and behaviors toward their child's education and the IEP process.

I believe that as professionals we tend to assume instead of ask questions or try to get clarification because it is easier and less time consuming. Nevertheless, the fact is that we should ask questions and get clarification to help families if it is needed. For instance, during IEP meetings Latino parents are not as involved as other parents and thus the assumption is that Latino parents do not care or do not know how to help and advocate for their children. Making this assumption is not as helpful as it would be to simply take the time to ask more questions regarding the concerns the family may have the plan and their students educational needs.

Researcher Background

I am a Latina Special Education Teacher fluent in both English and Spanish. Prior to working at Washington Middle School I worked for Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) as a Migrant Resource Teacher for two years. As a Migrant Resource Teacher I was responsible for developing and implementing an educational plan for students while collaborating with the general education teachers. Not only did I work with migrant students but it was also my responsibility to work with their parents and families. I led workshops for parents and invited them to participate in different parents and events such as conferences and trainings. The families I worked with were Latino, typically from different regions of Mexico with primary language being Spanish or a dialect from that particular region. It was difficult to gain their trust and have them participate in parent workshops throughout the school year. In order to get

parents to actively participate in the workshops, they needed to feel motivated and empowered.

As a migrant resource teacher, I worked with parents to help develop this motivation and create a sense of parent empowerment.

Currently, I have been teaching as an Educational Specialist for the last two years with 7th and 8th grade students. It is here in this current position that I realized Latino Spanish speaking parents have a difficult time actively participating in IEP meetings, just as migrant parents had a difficult time. This is why I want to find out what the Latino Spanish speaking parents need in order to be able to be effective and active participants during IEP process.

Therefore, there is a need to ensure that parents understand their invaluable role as an active participant in their child's education and comprehend all aspects of the IEP document so as to be an advocate for their child's academic and social progress is obvious and undisputable.

Definition of Terms

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** is a federal law that states how state and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from ages 3-18 or 21 with 14 specific categories of disability.
- **Individual Educational Plan (IEP):** is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.
- **California Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA):** provides all special education service needs of children residing within the region boundaries and develops a local plan describing how it would provide special education services.
- **Parent Procedural Safeguard:** is a set of parental rights under IDEA that are designed

to protect the rights of parents and their children with a disability and it also gives suggestions to families and school systems on how to resolve disputes.

- **Advocate:** is someone who supports or defends a cause or someone who pleads on another person's behalf.
- **LEA representative:** A principal, special education director, teacher, or anyone who can be sure the services in the **IEP** are provided to the child. This person must know about the regular education curriculum and the school district's resources.
- **Local Educational Agency (LEA):** Term used to describe a school district participating in a SELPA.
- **Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CLD):** Diversity of both culture and language spoken by the person.
- **Special Education:** Special education refers to a range of educational and social services provided by the public school system and other educational institutions to individuals with disabilities who are between three and 21 years of age.

Acronyms

LSSP: Latino Spanish-Speaking Parents

EOP: English Only Parents

IEP: Individual Educational Plan

SELPA: Special Education Local Plan Areas

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

Through working with Latino Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities in Monterey County, for the past five years, it has been apparent that many parents lack the necessary knowledge and understanding of meeting protocols and processes of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Factors and barriers that cause parents to have lack of understanding of the IEP process have been identified to be language and culture. Spanish-speaking Latino parents face several barriers, including language and culture, which inhibits them from understanding their parental rights and to actively participate and advocate for their children during IEP meetings. Although there is knowledge and research on some of the barriers Latino Spanish-speaking families face, there is still a need to understand their current perception and understanding of the IEP process. This need is especially high on the central coast but particularly at my current school site. By identifying Latino Spanish-speaking parents' perception of the IEP process then current obstacles can be identified and possible solutions or strategies can be designed to help Latino Spanish-speaking parents be confident and active participants during the IEP process.

Selection Process

A systematic search was conducted using three online databases, including ERIC, Google scholar, and JSTOR. To locate the selected articles, the following descriptors were used: (a) IEP process, (b) Latino parents, (c) participation, (d) Spanish speaking parents, (e) parent perception, (f) IEP experiences. The descriptors that were included in the search were included as a group to improve results. Once a useful article was found, the title was copied and searched for in ERIC or JSTOR databases within CSUMB Library's article database. The references found in the

article were used to further identify additional articles.

Criteria of Selection

Included in this review are articles that met the following criteria: (a) the purpose of the study included examining Latino parent experiences with the IEP process, (b) participants of the studies were Latino or Mexican American, (c) parents knowledge and understanding of their rights, (d) participants primary language other than English, (e) published work from 1983-2012, (f) studies that focused on cultural and linguistically diverse families who have children with disabilities, (g) studies that identified culture and language as a barrier, (h) the purpose of the study was to identify the perception of the IEP process for parents who have children with disabilities.. The studies excluded from this literature review are: (a) studies that did not include parents of children with disabilities as participants, (b) studies that did not include non-native English speakers as participants (c) studies that only focus on students with disabilities and not their parents.

Parent Rights

One of many of the responsibilities of a parent is advocate for a quality education for their child. The responsibility increases for parents of children with disabilities since their roll as advocate becomes crucial in order to provide the best educational opportunity for their child. As the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 mandates, an IEP team should be composed of parents/guardians, special education teachers, general education teachers, and other important providers of services who should be responsible for the development and implementation of the IEP, § 300.323(d) (National Archives and Records Administration, W. C., & Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), W. C. (ED), Washington, DC., 2006). Parents, above all the people in the team, are the essential component of the

Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. According to Lo (2008), “Parents have been considered crucial members on the team because of their unique understanding of their child’s needs, medical history, likes and dislikes, and daily routine” (p. 21). Parents are the key components of the team that allow teachers to fully understand a student at school and at home.

Lack of Knowledge

Lo (2012) conducted a study of two families from different cultural backgrounds and found that “it is common for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) families to attend their child’s first team meeting without knowing its purpose.”(p.15). Similarly, Padron, Wilson and Zetlin (1996) noted in their study that parents who, even after attending IEP meetings and signing documents, could not identify why they had a meeting. Therefore, the assumption of the parents and other professionals is that the parental role is one of consent giving. Despite the importance of parent inclusion in the process, crucial information is still not clearly explained to the parents. Parents of students with disabilities have felt a need to be self-educated on the IEP process. However, proper protocols dictates that it is the responsibility of the school district personnel to keep parents informed and make sure they understand their rights as parents (Fish, 2008). More so, it is important to inform parents in their native language of their rights as, both, an active member of the IEP team and parent in order to allow them the opportunity to properly advocate for their child. As mandated by IDEA under section § 300.322(e), district providers have to make any necessary arrangements to accommodate for any non-English speaker (NARA, W. C., & OSES (ED), W. C. (ED), Washington, DC., 2006). Unfortunately, many times special education teachers and members of the IEP team lack the personnel to properly accommodate for culturally and linguistically diverse parents.

Barriers for Parents

Language Limitations. Although many Latino Spanish-speaking families have been residing in the United States for several years, they retain their native language as part of their traditional values and learn very little English (Salas, 2004; Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2002; Padron, Wilson, & Zetlin, 1996). Thus, language has been a continuous barrier for non English-speaking parents of children with disabilities during the IEP process. Parents hesitate to attend IEP meetings because they feel intimidated by the personnel and the language being used at the meetings (Lo, 2012; Salas, 2004; Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2002; Padron, Wilson, Zetlin, 1996). In a study conducted by Fish (2008), with a high percentage of white parents, it was found that in order to “decrease confusion IEP team members should use terms that parents are familiar with rather than unfamiliar jargon” (p. 13). The language used in meetings is not only difficult for native English speakers but, even more difficult for non-native English speakers. In order to accommodate for Spanish-speaking parents, an interpreter must be provided for every IEP meeting (NARA, W. C., & OSES (ED), W. C. (ED), Washington, DC., 2006). According to Lo (2012) in study regarding the experiences of two non-English speakers, interpreters do not always interpret the same information that the team members deliver. Lo (2012) states, “Although the other IEP team members sometimes spoke for a long time the interpreter’s interpretations were often very short” (p.15). Unfortunately, interpreters can change the content and misinterpret information, causing communication between parents and team members to be inaccurate. Interpreters can also at times, exclude the information overall.

Oftentimes, parents will not speak up regarding clarification of information or express concern regarding the teams’ development of the IEP meeting because they are embarrassed and intimidated (Lo, 2012; Salas 2004; Padron, Wilson, & Zetlin, 1996). A study conducted by Salas

(2004) on the experiences of 10 Mexican American women with the IEP process found that, often times these women were silenced as a result of their opinions not being taken into account or not being given the opportunity to speak. Similarly, in a comparative study Robert Christopher Stein (1983) found that, Latino Spanish-speaking parents actively participate less and provide fewer suggestions than compared to white families. As a result of being ignored, many Spanish-speaking Latino parents do not actively participate during IEP meeting, and unfortunately, this is interpreted as lack of caring (Salas, 2004; Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2002; Padron, Wilson, & Zetlin, 1996). When Latino Spanish-speaking families are given multiple opportunities to communicate freely in their own language and are culturally accepted then it changes the effects of parent involvement (Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2002). Therefore, open communication and parent involvement will take place if parents feel respected and valued. Hughes, Valle-Riestra, and Arguelles (2002) studied the experiences and perceptions of Spanish speaking Latino families of children with disabilities in a school with majority Latino staff. The study found that the majority of the families in the study were satisfied with the communication, involvement throughout the IEP process and families expressed an interest for parent trainings (Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2002). This demonstrated that Latino parents do care, but they need their cultural and linguistic differences to be understood in order for them to be able to feel comfortable enough to speak freely.

Culture. Cultural similarities between parents and school staff make the ultimate difference between a positive and negative experience for Latino Spanish-speaking families in the IEP process. It is important to understand that for many immigrant families from different cultures, the IEP process is a foreign concept (Lo, 2012). Therefore, everything about an IEP and everyone involved in the process are new concepts to the family. Stoner et al. (2005) found in a

study regarding parent perceptions that “parents reported that entering the special education system was traumatic, initial IEP meetings were confusing, and obtaining services was complicated” (p. 43). Consequently, staff must have a mindset of greater understanding and nature of acceptance when it comes to working with families with cultural differences during initial IEP’s; IEP processes as a whole. Even body language can have an impact on parents’ perception of staff during an IEP meeting. Lo (2012) found that Asian and Hispanic cultures place an emphasis on non-verbal communication such as body language and facial gestures. This means, that parents of other cultures determine a positive or negative experience partially based on how they are treated by staff during IEP meetings, which ultimately impacts parent participation during the entire IEP process. Therefore, staff has to be incredibly sensitive and aware of their behavior because even the smallest action can affect a parent and their ability to be active participants during an IEP meeting.

Conclusion

Overall, the studies reviewed identified several barriers in the areas of language and culture for Latino Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities. Barriers identified included a lack of knowledge of the parent role, intimidation by spoken language and academic language used during meetings, intimidation by personnel and IEP team, inaccurate interpretations, parent input ignored, and the lack of cultural and linguistic sensitivity. These barriers then impede Latino parents from expressing themselves during the IEP process and are the reasons for lack of participation during IEP meetings and the process in general. Consequently, further research must be conducted to accurately identify additional barriers Latino families of children with disabilities and determine proper strategies to create successful IEP experiences and increase parent participation in the IEP process.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

To better understand the current needs of the Latino Spanish speaking parents at the school site and improve the quality and capacity of parent participation during IEP meetings, a mixed methods research design was used to gather data. The data gathered was used and analyzed to answer the following questions:

1. What contributes to the current lack of participation of Latino Spanish speaking parents, during IEP meetings my current school site?
2. What information is necessary to fill the knowledge gap for parents who have a difficult time understanding the IEP process in general?

Overall Research Plan

A mixed methods design was used to collect three types of data. The data gathered was taken from parent and teacher interviews, frequency counts of parent participation during meetings and observation notes of IEP meetings for both Spanish-speaker and non-Spanish speaker parents. Based on the data a comparison was made between the Latino Spanish-speaking parents and non-Spanish speaking parents participation during IEP meetings and interpretations of the IEP process. This helped me identify what Spanish-speaking parent's need in order to help them improve their participation in the IEP process. As a result, the data was used to make a recommendation for possible changes for administrators, teachers and the parents in order to help improve Latino Spanish-speaking parent's participation during the IEP process.

Specific Research Plan

The research design that was used was a mixed methods design; both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The use of interviews facilitated an understanding of the needs

and perceptions of both teachers and the parents interviewed. The quantitative data gave a total count of comments made by the parent per meeting. This data measured the participation of Spanish speaking parents and helped to make a comparison of participation between non-Spanish and Spanish speaking parents. The qualitative data used were observation notes that were taken during the observation of the IEP meetings, which helped me note any behaviors or body language that cannot be identified with an interview or by frequency counts. The different types of data allowed me to gather a more extensive explanation of why Spanish-speaking parents at my school site are demonstrating a difficult time participating during IEP meetings. Additionally, the data allowed for specific recommendations to be made for administrators, staff, and Latino Spanish-speaking parents.

Setting. The setting of my study took place at the middle school I currently work at, on the Central Coast of California particularly in the city of “Landscape”. The city of Landscape is an agricultural town, which according to the U.S Census of 2010 has a population of about 154,500. Of the total population, 76% of the cities population is Hispanic, 13% is White, 7% is Asian and the remainder 4% is “Other”. The largest industry in Landscape is agriculture, which employs more than 49% of the population, both females and males, in the area (city-dta.com). A large percentage of agricultural workers have emigrated from rural regions of Mexico such as Oaxaca and Michoacán. According to the U.S. Census, the average income per household is \$48,000, which is below the national average. The city of Landscape is surrounded by very affluent communities and at the same time of small farmworker towns.

The school in which this study was conducted is a middle school with grades 7 and 8, located on the south side of Landscape. Currently, my middle school site has a total population of 1, 020 students with, and 80% of the students being Hispanic. The total number of students

that are English Language Learners has been estimated at 51%. Out of the entire schools population, 9% of the students are in Special Education programs. According to Salinas.Schoolswisepress.com, 71% of the students qualified for free or reduced-priced meals. The average class size for math classes are significantly smaller compared to History and Science. There is an average of 23 students per class for English, 28 students per class for history, 25 students per class in math, and 29 students per class for science. There are a total of 51 fully credentialed teachers, and five of them are Special Education teachers. This middle school also currently has three different types of Special Education programs: 1) Resource for students with mild to moderate Learning Disabilities, 2) the Therapeutic Intervention program for students with emotional and behavioral needs, and 3) a Social Communication program for students with Autism. In total, there are 98 students between all three programs.

Participants. A total of five Latino Spanish-speaking parents were chosen to be evaluated on their perceptions of the IEP process. Only Latino Spanish speaking parents were selected for interviews. The five Latino Spanish speaking parents in the Resource program at my site were randomly selected to take part in the study. The qualification for a parent to participate in the study was to speak only Spanish. The first participant was a single mother of two children who immigrated to the United States from Mexico around ten years ago. She works night shifts and has an elementary level of education. Participant number two was a mother of two young men both in Special Education, and who has a high school education level. She also emigrated from Mexico but she has been in this country for 20 years. Participant number three was a mother of four children ages 22 to 11 years old who works in the fields along with her husband. Her primary language is Mixteco, Spanish is her second language and she did not attend school in the rural regions of Oaxaca. The fourth participant was a mother of three children who also

works in the fields; she did not attend school in Oaxaca. The last participant was a single mother of a young man who has a secondary level of education. Along with the five Latino Spanish-speaking parents selected five additional non-Spanish speaking parents were also observed during meetings for comparison but not interviewed.

This study also involved two of my fellow colleagues in the Resource program at my school cite. “Barbara” is the Department Chair who has worked at this middle school for the last eight years and has been teaching for a total of 15 years. She has taught in schools in Southern California and on the Central Coast and has experience with Latino Spanish speaking families, although she is only fluent in English. She has experience with severe emotionally disturbed children and mild to moderate students in general education. She is well versed in Applied Behavior Analysis and in designing and implementing Behavior Intervention Plans. She has a multi-subject credential and a single subject credential in English.

The second teacher is “Susan” who has been teaching Special Education at the middle school for two years and has a total of six years of experience teaching. Her previous teaching experiences were all on the East Coast and with English only speaking families. She has experience working with students who have emotional and behavior disabilities at the high school level, as well as special education students in general education. She has a single subject credential in Foundational Science and a Special Education Credential.

Data collection procedures

I interviewed the selected parents and used three broad general questions to determine Latino Spanish-speaking parent’s perceptions and understanding of the IEP process and meetings. At the same time, I took field notes during the IEP meetings for both English and Spanish speaking parents. This process was done over a five-week time frame. Shortly after the

interviews were completed the data was analyzed to find common topics between, teacher responses and parents responses on the interpretation of LSSP lack of participation, parent perceptions of the IEP meetings and participation during meetings.

Qualitative data. The use of interviews facilitated the understanding of the need and perceptions of both teachers and the parents interviewed. Each parent interviewed was asked three open-ended questions 1) Tell me about your experience in IEP meetings. 2) How do you feel about your participation and the participation of others in the IEP meetings? 3) What can we do to make things better? The questions were designed to give parents the freedom to express their perceptions about the IEP process and feelings regarding IEP meetings. The questions also gave the opportunity for the parents to provide suggestions in order to improve their participation during IEP meetings.

Observation notes were taken to record specific behaviors, body language and other details that took place during IEP meeting of both English and Spanish speaking parents. The observations were recorded simultaneously on the Frequency chart to capture any particular behavior or emotion that is or is not expressed during the IEP meetings.

Quantitative data. Frequency data was collected on a data chart that I created to help identify the total amount of times the parents contributed a comment during the IEP meetings. Whether it is answering any questions, expressing concerns, or simply making a general comment (see Appendix A). This data measured the overall participation of Spanish-speaking parents and non Spanish-speaking parents. The purpose of the frequency data collection was to make a comparison between the number of times non-Spanish and Spanish-speaking parents participate verbally during the IEP meeting. I collected all data during IEP meetings lead by

other colleagues. A total of ten IEP meetings were observed, five of them were meetings with non-Spanish speaking parents and five with Spanish-speaking parents.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data. I transcribed, read and reviewed all five-parent interview responses. The answers were categorized to determine patterns of similarities among parent concerns, beliefs, and experiences during IEP meetings. The responses were then placed in a table and were coded to determine common topics.

Observation notes were taken during IEP meetings and were read and reviewed to identify any common patterns or differences between parents participating in IEP meetings.

Quantitative data. The data from the frequency counts were totaled, analyzed and compared to see any differences in numbers between the number of times non-Spanish and Spanish-speaking parents participated. The data also allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the type of participation taking place at the IEP meeting by the parent. The comparison helped to determine if there is a discrepancy between the participation of non-Spanish and Spanish speaking parents.

Limitations/Threats to Internal Validity

The prime concern was that I would not get an honest response from the participants during the interviews. This was a concern because I felt they would hold back on their true feelings because some of the parents know me and have participated in IEP meetings with me before the interview. Then there was a concern that since the five participants interviewed were selected randomly, that some of the parents would be reluctant to share their true interpretations because there was no prior trust relationship established.

Another concern was that the frequency count data would be higher for IEP meetings that were longer in duration than those of a shorter duration. The fluctuation in duration of the

meetings depended on the type of meeting, whether annual or triennial, and the teacher holding the meeting.

Summary

Overall, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through the use of interviews and frequency counts of comments made by the parent and observation notes. This data measured the participation of Spanish speaking parents and helped to make a comparison of participation between non-Spanish and Spanish speaking parents. Furthermore, a recommendation for increased participation will be made based on the information revealed during the study.

Chapter IV: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the reasons why Latino Spanish speaking parents lack participation during IEP meetings. This chapter will address the responses to the following questions: 1.) What contributes to the current lack of participation of Latino Spanish speaking parents, during IEP meetings at my current school site? 2.) What information is necessary to fill the knowledge gap for parents who have a difficult time understanding the IEP process in general? Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected over several weeks through a series of audiotaped interviews, frequency data counts and observation notes. The data was analyzed in order to identify a comparisons between participants and to ascertain if common topics emerge.

Interviews

Special Education Teacher Responses. The two Special Education teachers that participated in the study were asked three questions during an interview: 1) Tell me about LSSP involvement and participation during IEP meetings? 2) What do you think might contribute to their participation or lack of? 3) Does there seem to be a difference between LSSP and EOP participation? Why do you think there is a difference? The following were their responses.

‘Barbara’ mentioned that she has been able to notice that Latino Spanish-speaking parents do not participate as much and that they rarely ask questions. She expressed that she feels that a contributing factor for the lack of participation is that parents trust the teachers and feel that they are the experts and do not question the decisions made by the teacher. She shared that, “often Spanish-speaking parents have very little education, and so I think they look to the teacher as the one with answers about school, learning and IEP’s” (L.Clayton, personal communication, April 14,2015). ‘Barbara’ also suggested that a difference between the participation in IEP

meetings of Latino Spanish-speaking parents and English only parents is noticeable and she suggested that, parents would probably talk more if the teacher spoke Spanish, rather than having to go through an interpreter.

During the interview with ‘Susan’ she voiced that she has noticed that Latino Spanish-speaking parents do contribute less at IEP meetings than English only parents but that she feels that the difference is not significant. She said, “In majority of the meetings I have had the Latino Spanish speaking parents ask one to three questions at the meetings and EOP probably one to five questions” (T. Seaver, personal communication, April 14,2015). ‘Susan’ expressed that she feels that what contributes to their participation or lack there of is the lack of education as well as language to a certain degree. She said, “I feel that the lack of education in general affected the participation during an IEP meeting with both Latino Spanish-speaking parents and English only parents equally” (T. Seaver, personal communication, April 14,2015). She believes that the level of education of a parent determines the participation level of the parent during IEP meetings.

Table 1
Highlight of Teacher Responses

Questions	Response Teacher 1-‘Barbara’	Response Teacher 2- ‘Susan’
1) Tell me about LSSP involvement and participation during IEP meetings?	-Not much participation -Rarely ask questions -Questions are in reference to grades.	-Participation is less than of EO parents but not significantly lower
2) What do you think might contribute to their participation or lack of?	-Lack of education -Parents feel teachers are experts -Do not question decisions because they trust teachers	-Lack of education -Lack of knowledge of the school system -Language
3) Does there seem to be a difference between LSSP and EOP participation?	-Yes, difference is noticeable	-Yes, but at times both LSSP and EO parents lack participation

Note. The information is a shortened version and highlights of the responses given by each of the teachers to each of the questions presented during the interview.

Commonalities in responses were discovered when comparing the answers of both teachers as illustrated in Table 1. Both teachers have noticed a difference in participation between Latino Spanish-speaking parents and English only parents in IEP meetings. They mentioned that Latino Spanish speaking parent participation is lower, although one teacher believes the difference is minimal. Both teachers suggest that one reason for lower participation is lack of education, whether it is for Latino Spanish speaking parents or English only parents.

Parent Responses. Five randomly selected Latino Spanish-speaking parents participated in an audiotaped interview in which they were asked a series of three open ended questions in Spanish: 1) Tell me about your experience in IEP meetings. 2) How do you feel about your participation and the participation of others during the IEP meetings? 3) What can we do to increase your participation during IEP meetings? The following were their responses.

Participant 1, expressed that her experiences in IEP meetings were confusing at the beginning. When her son was in elementary school he was placed in Special Education; she did not understand that there was a difference between the mild/moderate program and the moderate/severe program. She was under the impression that he would be placed with students that were severely disabled. She explained that it wasn't until the transition meeting with the Special Education teacher from our middle school that she understood that he would be placed in Special Education classes and what that meant. An explanation of the difference between the SPECIAL EDUCATION program in elementary school and the program in middle school was also provided to her. She said, "My concern and my fear was that he would be with the other children who are really special and then she told me he was going to be with children who were regular like him but that had a different type of learning" (M.De Leon, personal communication, April 16, 2015). She also stated that she feels good about her participation and the participation

of others during the IEP meetings and that she liked the way teachers explained everything to her. She suggested that one thing that we can do is give a better explanation of what special education is and the difference in programs and classes during the initial IEP meetings.

Participant 2 shared that her experience with IEP meetings have been good but at the beginning when her sons were qualified everything was very confusing. She felt overwhelmed with the amount of meetings she had to attend and participate in because she really didn't know what they were about even while having a translator. She did state that with time she began to understand and get used to the IEP meetings and therefore felt more comfortable. She said, "My participation is to be there even if I sometimes do not understand many things but I slowly start understanding and if I have any questions I feel comfortable to ask because I know I will be supporting my children and I take advantage of the meetings to find out about my sons" (M.Delgado, personal communication, April 16, 2015). Her suggestion was to have more communication with the parents regarding their situation at home because she said, sometimes teachers do not know if parents has difficulty getting to the meeting.

Participant 3 shared that her experiences have been good and that she feels good about her participation during IEP meetings. She mentioned that she likes how everything is going with her daughter and that she likes the fact that she can talk with her teachers during the meeting. She was very short in the responses she provided.

Participant 4 mentioned that everything is good regarding the meetings and that she participates by attending the meetings and asking questions when she wants to know something. When she was asked, what type of things can change to improve participation she said, "Well no, everything is fine" (E.Oros, personal communication, April 16, 2015).

Participant 5 talked about her previous experiences in IEP meetings and mentioned that she has had good experiences but she said the information could sometimes get confusing. She was concerned about the way the principals participate in the IEP meetings because she felt that the principals at her sons' elementary school were more attentive than the principals now at the middle school. She said, "I attend the meetings and I like that the teachers are there to tell me about my son but at my sons other school the principal was at the meetings talking to me and here they show up late and they're on their phone" (I.Mora, personal communication, April 20, 2015). The suggestion she made was to have teachers continue with the open communication with the parents because that makes parents feel that they matter.

Out of the five participants interviewed, all were the mothers of children who have been in the special education program for more than three years. They are all of Mexican descent from various regions of Mexico, and with varying levels of education. Two of the five participants speak Spanish as their second language and come from very rural regions of Mexico. All of their responses were used to formulate a comparison in responses to see if there are common feelings or concerns.

After comparing the interview responses several commonalities were discovered as demonstrated in Table 2. Out of the five participants interviewed, three of them mentioned being confused during IEP meetings, more so at the beginning when their son or daughter first qualified for special education in elementary. All participants mentioned they felt good about their participation in IEP meetings and two out of the five parents stated they ask questions when necessary. Three of the five participants mentioned that they attended the meeting as a way of participating. When asked to provide a suggestion on what to improve three out of the five parents mentioned that communication with parents was essential, whether it be to find out about

their home lives or to continue with the open communication to make parents feel comfortable.

The other two participants mentioned that everything was fine and nothing had to be changed.

Table 2

Latino Spanish-Speaking Parent Responses to Interview Questions

Partici- pants	Question 1 Tell me about your experience in IEP meetings.	Question 2 How do you feel about your participation and the participation of others during the IEP meetings?	Question 3 What can we do to increase your participation during IEP meetings?
1	Confusing initially	-Felt good -Liked teachers explanations	-Provide an in-depth description of program -Increase communication with parents
2	Very confusing initially	-Felt good -Asks question but still has difficulty understanding -Attends all meetings	-Increase communicate with parents
3	Good	-Felt good -Attends meetings	-Everything is fine
4	Good	-Felt good -Asks questions when needed	-Everything is fine
5	Good but at times confusing	-Felt good -Attends all meetings -Teachers are present but principals not always	-Give parents time to respond -Teachers should keep communication with parents open

Note. The information in the table is the shortened versions of the participant's responses and common themes.

Frequency Counts

Over a period of six weeks, ten IEP meetings were observed and both frequency counts and observation notes were taken. The meetings were not purposely selected or scheduled; five were IEP meetings with Latino Spanish-speaking parents and five were meetings with EOP. The meetings observed ranged from 30 minutes to 50 minutes in duration and were either annual IEP meetings or triennial IEP meetings. The Latino Spanish-speaking parents that were observed were not the same as the parents who participated in the interviews. The frequency counts were divided into three different areas or types of participation: questions, concerns, or answered any

questions. At the end of the meeting, all three areas were combined and totaled to calculate averages and then those averages were used to compare Latino Spanish-speaking parents and English-only parents.

Latino Spanish-Speaking Parents. Two of the IEP meetings that were observed had a district interpreter present, while the other meetings had a bilingual Special Education Teacher, General Education teacher, School Psychologist, and Assistant Principal. The bilingual special education teacher interpreted meetings with non-Spanish speaking staff.

During the IEP meetings observed parent participation ranged between 8 to 17 times. The overall average participation rate for Latino Spanish-Speaking Parents during a total of five IEP meeting was 11.8 times per meeting. When three different areas were identified, parents participated by asking questions with an average of 1.8 times per meeting. They also made comments with an average of 5 times per meeting, and answered any question an average of 5 times per meeting.

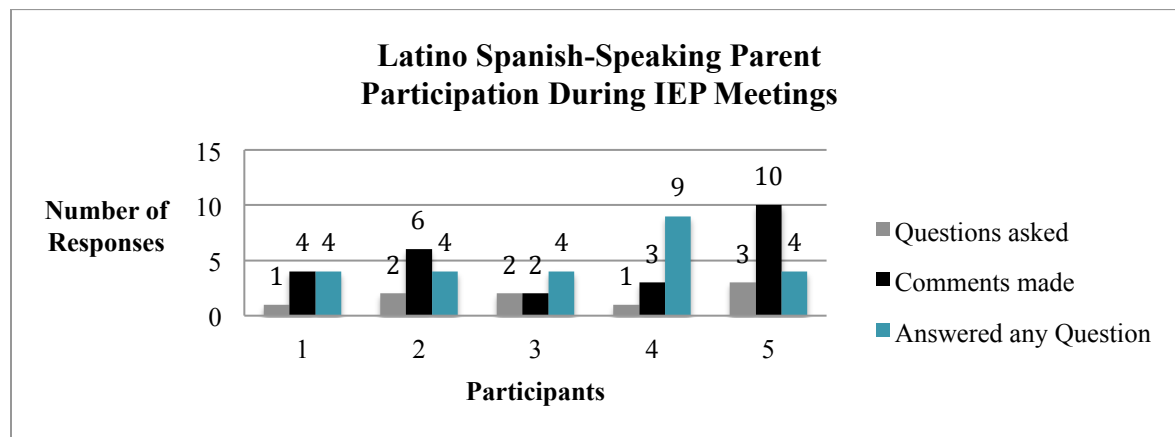


Figure 1. *Frequency Counts During IEP meetings for LSSP*

The information in Figure 1 indicates the number of times each parent participated during a meeting by any of the three different means of communication. Based on the data, although

Latino Spanish-Speaking Parents asked questions during the meetings, they made comments and answered questions at a higher rate.

English-Only Parents. Participation for English-only parents during IEP meetings ranged between 14 and 24 times. The overall average participation rate for English-only parents during the total of five IEP meeting is 18.2 times per meeting. When divided into the three different areas, parents participated by asking question with an average of 6.8 times per meeting, made comments with an average of 5.6 times per meeting and answered any question with an average of 5.8 times per meeting. The information in Figure 2 breaks down of the number of times each parent participated by either of the three of ways noted. Based on the data, English only parents ask questions at a higher rate during IEP meeting than they make comments or answered questions.

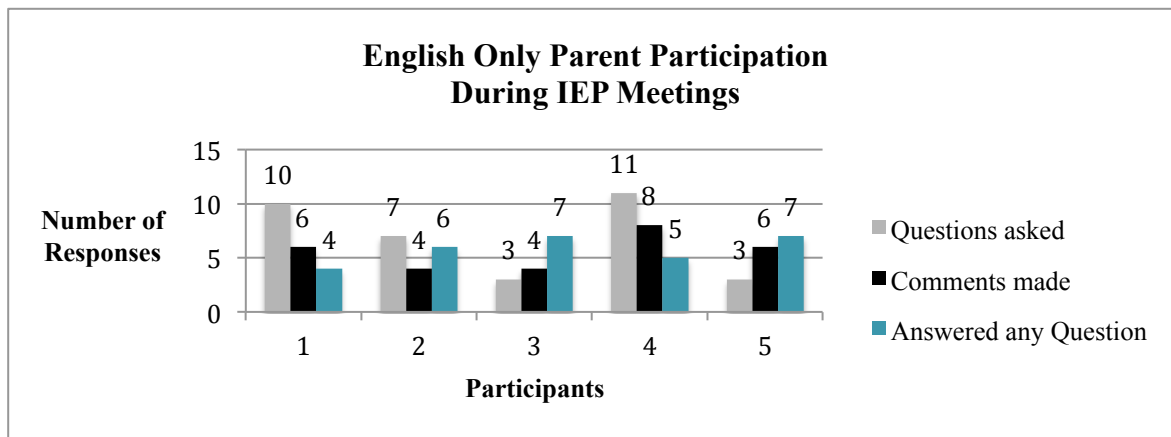


Figure 2. *Frequency Counts During IEP meetings for EOP*

Comparison

When comparing the participation of Latino Spanish-speaking parents to the participation of English only parents' during IEP meetings, the data indicates that Latino Spanish-speaking parents do participate less than EOP. Figure 3 demonstrates an overall comparison of the average participation of both groups of parents, per IEP meeting. The data shows that, Latino Spanish-speaking parents' average participation is 11.8 times per meeting while English-only parents

average 18.2 times per meeting. When the data is broken down into the three different types of participation, Latino Spanish-speaking parents showed that they answered questions and made comments at a higher rate than they asked questions. On the other hand, EOPs asked more often questions and made comments more than they answered questions. Overall, there was less Latino Spanish-speaking parents' participation during IEP meetings when compared to English-only parent participation.

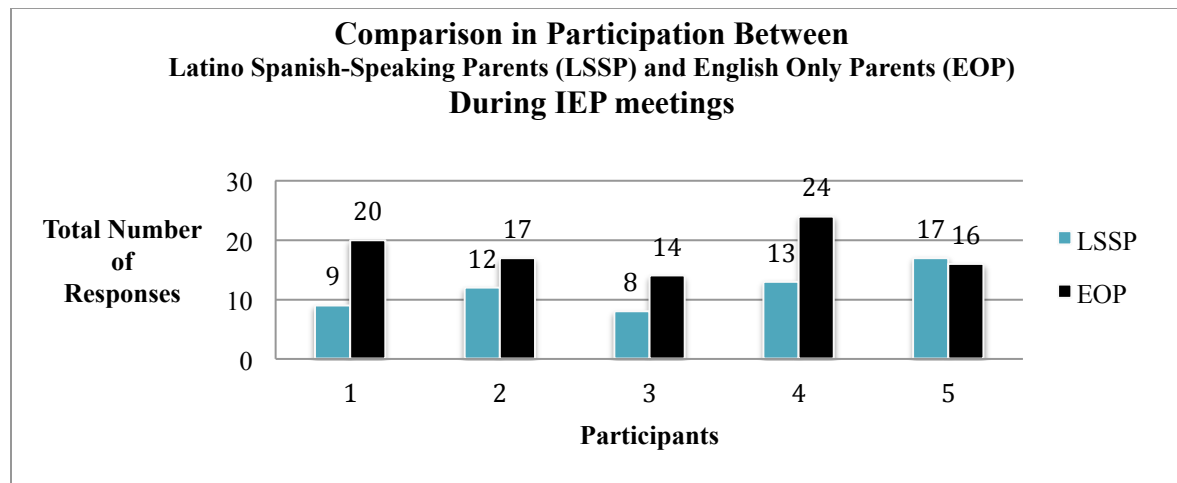


Figure 3. *Comparison in Participation Between LSSPs and EOPs During IEP meetings.* Participation represents the sum of questions asked, comments made and any answered questions

Observation

During the IEP meetings observation notes were taken to note any behaviors or body language that was not identified through interviews or frequency counts. In four out of the five Latino Spanish-speaking parents IEP meetings the parents were engaged and focused on the information being presented. Although they looked engaged, one of the parents had a confused expression on her face while trying to listen to both the interpreter and the teacher. Only one of the five parents seemed to be uninterested and kept looking at the clock several times during the meeting. The observations during meetings with English only parents were similar as those of Latino Spanish-speaking parents in that all were very focused and looked intrigued by the

information being presented during the meeting. Two of the parents did show that they were upset by the lack of presence of the administrators.

Summary

Over several weeks, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through a series of audiotaped interviews, frequency data counts, and observation notes. The results of the overall compilation of data revealed several commonalities and comparisons between Latino Spanish-speaking parent and English-only parent participation during IEP meetings. For the first research question the data suggested that what contributes to the current lack of Latino Spanish-speaking parents' participation is:

- Lack of education
- Parents believe they participate by attending the meetings
- The information presented is very confusing and difficult to understand

The quantitative data collected gave a better understanding of the difference in participation between the participation of the two groups of parents. Additionally, for research question number two, the data derived from the interviews demonstrated that the necessary information needed for parents is:

- Provide a better understanding of what special education is and explain the different types of programs
- Simply provide information during initial meetings but be honest with parents
- Clarify misconceptions of special education
- Talk to parents about the importance of active communication and participation

Overall, the data showed that parents perceive their participation as being adequate, although special education teachers were able to identify a difference in participation as proved

by the frequency counts data. Further interpretation will be made in order to provide a suitable recommendation to improve LSSP participation during IEP meetings.

Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter focuses on discussing the overall study and the findings that were derived from the data collection of the following research questions: 1.) What contributes to the current lack of participation of Latino Spanish speaking parents, during IEP meetings at my current school site? 2.) What information is necessary to fill the knowledge gap for parents who have a difficult time understanding the IEP process in general? The study was conducted throughout a five week period and took place at my middle school with parents of students in the mild to moderate resource program.

The study identified Latino Spanish-speaking parents' perceptions and understanding of IEP meetings and demonstrated that there is a discrepancy between LSSP and EOP participation during IEP meetings. The study gave me a better understanding of LSSP perspectives of the IEP process and the types of changes that can be made in order to increase parent participation during IEP meetings.

Findings Restated

The compiling of results from both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that there is currently a lower participation rate of LSSP in IEP meetings than EOP. The frequency results indicated that there is a difference in the average participation rate of 11.8 times per meeting of LSSP compared to an average of 18.2 times per meeting of EOP. In addition, EOP ask more questions than LSSP during IEP meetings and LSSP tend to answer more questions.

The data from the parent interviews gave a better understanding of LSSPs' perception of their experiences in IEP meetings and expressed their interpretation of their participation. The responses show that parents believe attending the IEP meeting is participating in the meeting,

and they only ask questions when they feel that it is necessary. A majority of the parents believe the initial stages of their experience in the special education program is the most confusing. Many do not understand the difference in special education programs and have misconceptions about special education. Although parents find the information confusing and have many questions, they do not ask to get clarification on the information. According to the information from the teacher interviews, the lack of asking clarifying questions on behalf of the LSSP is very evident during IEP meetings. The teacher interviews also indicated that if parent participation is minimal then that can be an indicator of a low level of education.

Significance of Findings

The purpose of the study was to provide a more in depth understanding of how parents feel about the process and provide a recommendation to increase Latino Spanish-Speaking parent participation. The findings show that there is a lower LSSP participation rate when compared to EOP. This outcome is common to find across the nation and several researchers have identified several barriers in the areas of language and culture that impede or affect Latino Spanish-speaking parent participation. Barriers identified include a lack of knowledge of the parent role, intimidation by spoken language and academic language used during meetings, intimidation by personnel and IEP team, inaccurate interpretations, parent input ignored and lack of cultural and linguistic sensitivity.

My findings indicate that LSSP felt good about their participating and involvement in the meeting. This implies that Latino Spanish-speaking parents do not realize that their participation is limited and they do not see that they do not ask as many questions as other parents do. This response can be associated with the fact that in the Mexican culture, educators are viewed in high regards and are seen as experts in the subject, as suggested by 'Barbara' one of our special

education teachers. Previous researchers have stated that parents will not speak up regarding clarification of information or express concern regarding the teams' development of the IEP meeting because they are embarrassed and intimidated (Lo, 2012; Salas 2004; Padron, Wilson, & Zetlin, 1996). This does not appear to be the case at our current school site, all parents stated that they were pleased with the participation of the IEP team and they felt comfortable enough to ask questions if needed.

The fact that parents continue to be confused in the initial stages of the IEP process is a consistent problem that needs to be resolved. Lo (2012) conducted a study of two families from different cultural backgrounds and found that "it is common for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) families to attend their child's first team meeting without knowing its purpose." (p.15). Two of the parents I interviewed stated the same concern, that they attended the meeting without really knowing its purpose. It is very unfortunate that parents are asked to agree with the determination of the meeting without really understanding the terms of the agreement. Padron, Wilson and Zetlin (1996) noted in their study parents who, even after attending IEP meetings and signing documents, could not identify why they had a meeting. Although, case carriers make decisions in the IEP that will benefit the student, input from the parent is still crucial. The question of, "Do they understand what they are signing?" was not addressed during the interviews. Despite the fact that the question was not addressed, parents did state that the use of district interpreters make the process of understanding the information much easier, even though the information in Spanish is sometimes difficult to understand.

A comparison in average rate of participation indicated that Latino Spanish-speaking parents ask fewer questions during IEP meetings than EOP. Similarly Stein (1983) found that, Latino Spanish-speaking parents actively participate less and provide fewer suggestions than

compared to white families. This study conducted 22 years ago is still validated today. Currently there is a 40% difference in the average participation rates between LSSP and EOP during IEP meetings. This gap in participation must be closed and a plan must be put in place in order to achieve equity.

Recommendation

Change must take place at different levels of the program in order to improve LSSP participation during IEP meetings. For example, the **Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA)** must change the procedures that include information delivery during the initial stages of qualifying students for special education. SELPA must require staff to inform the parents of the difference in programs of special education offered in the county and in each particular district. Additionally, teachers must clarify misconceptions of special education and inform and explain the disability their child was qualified under. This is very necessary because in the Latino culture having a disability or being in the special education program is automatically associated with being severely, physically, verbally or mentally impaired.

Simplifying and clarifying the initial stages of the IEP process does not mean “dumb it down” and limiting the official terms and language used. It means actually taking the time to explain the special education program and the difference between mild to moderate and moderate to severe levels. This is needed specifically because parents stated in the interviews that the transition meetings they attended helped clarify some of the confusion and questions pertaining to the classroom placement of their child. Furthermore, district interpreters must also be trained to utilize the correct language and explain or provide examples of the terms being used. Interpreters are a fundamental part of the overall IEP process. Finally, a parent workshop led by school administration and special education teachers that providing LSSPs with specific

examples of different type of active participation as well as an explanation of the importance of active communication and participation, would benefit both parents and students outcome in the long run.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research needs to be conducted to determine if an increase in LSSP participation will increase students' academic and behavioral improvement. If studies show a connection between an increase in participation during IEP meetings and student that there is academic and behavioral improvement, then there can be an emphasis on making a change to help improve parent participation.

Additionally, conducting a study with a larger sample size to increase an overall understanding of parents in different school districts, counties and states. The study will help to identify the different questions and concerns that are present among the community and would greatly benefit all persons involved in the development of an Individualized Education Plan; the students, parents, teachers and other supporters.

Conclusion

The current study has allowed me to reflect on the way I lead my IEP meetings and the way I explain the information being presented to Latino Spanish-speaking parents.

Understanding how parents feel about the IEP process will continue to allow me to make conscious decision and recommendation. I will be sure to take the time and explain terms that I might assume that parents understand. In addition will also communicate with parents about the importance of active communication and participation their child's IEP meetings. By helping educate and inform the parents, of students with IEP's, they will be able to make better decisions and recommendations about their child's education and future.

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Appendix A

Frequency Data Sheet for Latino Spanish-speaking Parent Participation During IEP Meetings

Target Behavior: The behavior being observed is participation during an IEP meeting, either by asking question, expressing a concern or answering questions.

Types of Behaviors: Q= questions C= concerns AQ= answers any questions

	Date	Start Time	Ending Time	Type of behavior frequency count	Totals
Participant #1				Q: C: AQ:	
	Observation Notes:				
Participant #2				Q: C: AQ:	
	Observation Notes:				
Participant #3				Q: C: AQ:	
	Observation Notes:				
Participant #4				Q: C: AQ:	
	Observation Notes:				
Participant #5				Q: C: AQ:	
	Observation Notes:				

Appendix B

Interview Questions for LSSP	
1.	Tell me about your experience in IEP meetings. <i>Hableme sobre su experiencia en las reuniones del PEI (IEP).</i>
2.	How do you feel about your participation and the participation of others during the IEP meetings? <i>¿Cómo se siente acerca de su participación y la participación de otras personas durante las reuniones del IEP?</i>
3.	What can we do to increase your participation during IEP meetings? <i>¿Qué podemos hacer para aumentar su participación en las reuniones del PEI (IEP)?</i>

Interview Questions for SPECIAL EDUCATION Staff	
1.	Tell me about LSSP involvement and participation during IEP meetings?
2.	What do you think might contribute to their participation or lack of?
3.	Does there seem to be a difference between LSSP and EOP participation? Why do you think there is a difference?

Appendix C

Special Education Teacher Responses to Interview Questions

Interview Responses	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
<p>Question 1</p> <p>Tell me about Latino Spanish-speaking parents involvement and participation during IEP meetings?</p>	<p>“I find that many of the Spanish-speaking parents do not participate to a great degree at IEP meetings. They also tend to agree with whatever is presented, and rarely ask questions but when they do they typical ask questions about their son/daughters grades.”</p>	<p>“In all of my IEP's with Spanish speaking parents I have a translator. Comparing the amount of involvement between my SSP and EO parents I would say that the SSP contributes a bit less at the meetings, however not significantly. In majority of the meetings I have had the SSP ask 1-3 questions at the meeting and EO parents probably 1-5. There are many times though that I am unsure if the parents (either EO or SS) truly understand the IEP process, but I am sure that the language barrier would contribute to not understanding terminology during an IEP meeting.”</p>
<p>Question 2</p> <p>What do you think might contribute to their participation or lack of?</p>	<p>“I think these parents do not ask too many questions because they feel that the teacher is the expert and knows what they are doing, so what would they, the parent, be able to contribute. Often the Spanish-speaking parents have very little education, so I think they look to the teacher as the one with the answers (about school, learning and IEPs). They put their trust in the teachers and the school”</p>	<p>“While I am sure that the language would contribute to the level of participation of the meeting, I feel that lack of education in general affects the participation during an IEP meeting with both SSP and EO parents equally.”</p>
<p>Question 3</p> <p>Does there seem to be a difference between Latino Spanish-speaking parents and English only parents participation? Why do you think there is a difference?</p>	<p>“I definitely do think that there is a difference in participation These parents would probably talk more if the teacher spoke Spanish, rather than having to go through an interpreter.”</p>	<p>“I think I answered it previously, but I think there does seem to be a difference between the participation Latino Spanish speaking parents and English only parents; Language could be what hinders the participation, however when there is a translator present that variable is somewhat removed; my opinion is that the parents education level and understanding of the school system is a bigger indicator of the level of participation.”</p>